TRUTH AND POETRY CONCERNING URIC ACID: AN EPITOME OF THE PRESENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT AS PRESENTED IN THE LITERATURE

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649433537

Truth and Poetry Concerning Uric Acid: An Epitome of the Present State of Knowledge of the Subject as Presented in the Literature by Lewellys F. Barker

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LEWELLYS F. BARKER

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TRUTH AND POETRY

Concerning

URIC ACID

AN EPITOME OF THE PRESENT STATE
OF KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUBJECT
AS PRESENTED IN THE
LITERATURE

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Reprinted from the Editorial Columns of the Journal of the American Medical Association 1905

CHICAGO:
AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PRESS
1905

PREFACE

WHEN the following articles were begun as
editorials in The JOURNAL of the American Medical Association, I had no idea that they
would be republished under my name. Requests that all the articles be united, however, have
been received and The JOURNAL has decided to issue
them, as collected, in the present form.

I have hesitated to attach my name to the reprint, since it is not a report of clinical and laboratory work of mine, but simply a review of the work of others. If, however, the pamphlet be successful in helping to clarify the ideas of American practitioners regarding the complex questions discussed, and, especially, if it protect physicians and, through them, the public, to a certain extent from the nostrum mongers who are misleading not only the profession but the public by their claims based on a theory that has long been recognized as fallacious, I shall be glad to have assumed the responsibility of compiler.

No one who grows can escape the pain of being forced, now and then, to sacrifice dearly cherished opinions; but if truth be followed, a satisfaction is always gained superior to that which has been lost. Emerson put it well:

> Hearsily know, When balf-gods go The gods arrive.

> > LEWELLYS F. BARKER.

BALTIMORE, Nov. 15th, 1905.



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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

New Facts and Theories Concerning Uric Acid Only Slowly
Assimilated by the Profession—Reasons Therefor—
Facile Publications—Unbridled Commercialism—Purpose
of the Present Review.

In the slow but steady advance which medicine is making, new facts are often established for a long time before they meet with general acceptance, and old theories have had their foundations washed out from under them years or decades before their fallacies have become generally recognized by the profession. It is easy to be too severe in criticizing the inertia of medical men in this respect, for the very conservatism which accounts for the facts mentioned has gone far to protect our guild from the too speedy welcoming of immature conceptions, on the one hand, and from the too easy rejection, on the other, of theories which, under assault by partisan or ignorant critics, prove ultimately to be sound. It is not an unwillingness to accept new truth nor a desire stubbornly to retain error which is characteristic of our profession. On the contrary, it is rather the fear of being duped concerning the new or of being cheated of old and welltried good which animates it and determines its action or inaction.

Now that the media of communication among physicians have been so marvelously multiplied, it may be urged that the excuse for a continuance in ignorance regarding medical facts and theories is not what it formerly was. Medical journals are,